

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**8 OCTOBER 2014**

**REFERENCE FROM COUNCIL**

**1. MOTION – BEDROOM TAX**

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Council held on 17 September 2014, the following motion was moved by Councillor Harper, seconded by Councillor English:

*The impact of Welfare Reforms around social housing tenants with the so called additional living space over a quota (the Bedroom Tax) is socially and morally divisive and unfair. It seeks to punish the poor and families with members with disabilities through withdrawing housing benefit. The impact is being felt throughout the UK and in Maidstone. Increasing numbers of families are as a result of these changes either being forced to move to smaller accommodation, often outside the community they live in, and where their social networks and support are, or are threatened with facing eviction.*

*In Maidstone at the same time there are tenants who independently want to downsize their social housing needs who are effectively being blocked by the requirement to go into a competitive bidding process for available accommodation.*

*This Council resolves to:*

- 1. Review the Housing Allocation Policy to give social housing tenants who voluntarily want to downsize accommodation, priority to move to smaller accommodation, thus freeing up larger properties for families.*
- 2. Do all it can within the Council's legal powers to minimise the impact of the Bedroom Tax on families where there may be short term absences and also people with disabilities where additional bedrooms may be required due to a person's disabilities.*
- 3. Actively campaign to seek a change in national legislation to repeal the Bedroom Tax.*

4. *Report back to the next Council meeting on the implementation of measures 1 – 3 above.*

1.2 The Council resolved to recommend to the Cabinet, as the decision making body, that the motion be agreed subject to the amendment of paragraph 3 in order that any representations to change the legislation are made via the Local Government Association and not directly by the Council.

1.3 **RECOMMENDED: That the Cabinet agree the motion relating to the Bedroom Tax subject to the amendment of paragraph 3 as follows:**

***Campaign for change to the legislation via the Local Government Association.***

**NOTE: A briefing note provided by the Director of Regeneration and Communities to assist the Council in its consideration of the motion is attached as Appendix A.**